The Decline of U.S. Hegemony: Regaining International Consent

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by

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This study uses United Nations General Assembly voting data between 1992 and 2005 as well as public opinion surveys from many countries to examine American authority and hegemony in international relations. The data is also used to compare the strength of that authority between the administrations of William Clinton and George W. Bush. In comparing the two time periods, it appears that the U.S. had significant authority over NATO countries in comparison to non-NATO countries during the Clinton years, and that authority declined significantly during the Bush presidency. After establishing these conclusions, potential outcomes of an international system characterized by declining authority are overviewed. Finally, based upon the findings, three options for future American policy are elaborated.

Since September 11, the American administration has chosen to confront contemporary threats to national and global security – terrorism, rogue regimes, drug trafficking, and WMDs – with a Bush Doctrine that leaves little room for negotiation. Moreover, in March of 2003, the U.S., without United Nations approval, invaded and proceeded to occupy Iraq. In June of 2006, America's closest ally, Great Britain, had a public that only held a 56% favorable opinion of the U.S. while other western states held far lower opinions – 39, 27, 23, and 43% for France, Germany, Spain, and Russia, respectively. Through its actions and attitudes, the United States has lost a large amount international consent.

I argue in this essay that during the Clinton administration, the U.S. possessed a significant amount of authority over most NATO countries – enough authority that America lead hegemony among those states – and those states consented to American actions in international relations. Additionally, I show that this authority declined significantly due to policy changes during the Bush administration.

In hegemony, the hegemon – the United States – and its subordinates are endowed with certain role expectations; expectations that are held by subordinates that consent to the hegemon's authority and, likewise, expectations that are projected by the hegemon onto subordinates. The more subordinate states conform to role expectations, the stronger the hegemony. I utilize two methodologies in measuring the role conformity among various states during the 1990's and 2000's. The first uses United Nations General Assembly voting data to compare the voting

[1] A great deal of thanks is in order for Alexander Thompson and Jennifer Mitzen, both of whom constantly challenged my argument throughout its development. Thank you also to Craig Jenkins; his passion for great empirical social research continues to inspire me. Finally, thanks to my parents for being the foundation to every opportunity for which I have been fortunate enough to be presented.
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record of the U.S. against other states and groups of states. Voting similarly to the United States is a subordinate role expectation, so the more a state votes with America, the more that state is conforming to the subordinate role expectation. The second methodology is cross-national attitude surveys, which reflect various public's consent for and perception of American authority; strong consent for and positive perception of American authority is expected in the case of hegemony. As mentioned, attitudes have recently taken a large unfavorable downturn for the United States among NATO nations.

After examining the results of both of these measures, I discuss some possible outcomes of a system of declining hegemony from differing theoretical perspectives. I then conclude with a normative argument pertaining to what the United States' policy ought to be amidst a system of declining hegemony. Ultimately, the interests of America as well as the global community are best served by a policy that seeks to regain international consent.

Authority and Hierarchy

Power in global politics is classically defined by Robert Dahl (1957) as "A's ability to get B to do something that B would not otherwise do."[3] Traditionally, this would entail that actor A coerce actor B through some form of action or threat of action or that actor A possess greater material capabilities than actor B. However, power in international relations may also be fashioned through the intersubjective construction of authority.

Political authority has been defined as "the legitimate practice of power."[4] Legitimacy here derives from those over which power is being practiced, so in authority relationships, A wills B to follow, and B voluntarily complies because A's commands are understood to be obligatory and legitimate. In a formal-legal sense, the obligation and legitimation comes from B's voluntary consent to a set of explicit agreements that create such power relations; the authority national governments draw from their laws is an example of authority in this sense. However, the sovereignty principles cherished by most governments today largely prevent formal-legal authority relationships between states, so legitimate authority in contemporary international relations is more often manufactured through "practice."

David Lake says that an authority relationship derived from practice is established when A offers to provide a good of sufficient value to B that B complies to the conditions necessary for A to carry out the materialization of that good.[5] Although a practice-based hierarchal relationship may begin as a rational exchange between A and B, Lake's claim that a self-interested trade-off is sufficient for a legitimate authority relationship is wanting. Legitimation, to be expanded later in the section on compliance, goes further than a good being provided in exchange for

[3] Lake 2006, p.24.
[4] Agnew 2005, p.443.
[5] Lake 2006, p.25.

compliance to certain rules or conditions. Nevertheless, Lake's discussion of a rational exchange does offer insight into how an authority relationship may come to exist through an exchange-based hierarchical relationship, which I will develop now.

Actor B's choice of a particular good, where A provides the good as well as establishes the rules (norms deemed to be necessary to produce the good), is the basis of the authority relationship, though not sufficient in creating an authority relationship. That is, whether deliberately or unintentionally, B is choosing a good that A provides over other alternative solutions to the same problem.[6] This choice translates into B's compliance with a set of rules in exchange for A's ability to provide the good – a hierarchical relationship. Hierarchy is like any social relationship in that it is not static, thus B must – at least initially – continue to choose A's good – and A must continue to provide the good – in order for the hierarchical relationship to be established. In other words, it is the good provided by A, rather than A itself, which is the principal dynamic in an exchange-based form of hierarchy. However, in the case of legitimate authority (as will be conferred briefly), the emphasis shifts from the good in a hierarchical relationship to the rules for which A establishes in exchange for providing the good.

The above explanation of hierarchy is a self-interest model, where B is complying with A's rules solely for the benefits afforded by A's good; it is a good model to explain how a basis for authority is often created between two actors. Yet, self-interest is only one manner of compliance, and compliance can be generated by way of three distinct mechanisms.[7] First, B may comply for fear of a physical penalty by an asymmetrically powerful A; although coercion may be integral to other kinds of hierarchy as a form of social control, coercion is inconsistent with the definition of authority discussed here. An authority relationship is contingent upon B's consent for A's rules, and coercion doesn't require consent.

Second, B may comply, as was mentioned, as a result of a cost-benefit analysis that establishes that compliance is more beneficial than noncompliance in terms of B's self-interest. B chooses the good provided by A because that particular option maximizes B's benefits relative to alternative options. Where coercion leaves B worse off than it would have been before a relationship, self-interest leaves B better off than it would have been by choosing another path. Compliance is generated by way of incentive, but the good – the incentive – need not be material. It may be a particular service or environment that A is providing in exchange for B's compliance to a set of rules. In order for a hierarchical relationship to persist by way of self-interested compliance, A must continually reproduce the good, and B must continually decide, in a calculated and deliberate manner, that compliance is in its best self-interest.[8]

The final way that B may comply is through legitimation, and it is only by legitimate compliance that a hierarchical relationship can become an authority relationship. Here, the rules generated by A are regarded as "right" or "just" because A's rules are consistent with B's interests (norms, values, and beliefs), and all actors

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[6] Scheppele and Soltan 1987, p.171.
[7] Hurd 1999, p.379.
[8] Hurd 1999, p.387.

pursue interests.[9] Another way of conceptualizing legitimate authority is to say that the interests of the hegemon have become the terms in which the interests of the subordinate are defined.[10] Legitimate compliance has two distinct features relative to self-interest and coercion: habituality and the potential absence of benefit maximization. If the rules become internalized, then the choice to comply with A's rules in exchange for A's good become habitual; the compliance is reproduced without premeditation. Not only have the rules become consistent with B's interests, they have become part of those interests. The rules have become the norm; noncompliance has become the exception and requires special consideration.[11] In habitual compliance, the authority relationship may be threatened by self-interest, for when B begins to reevaluate the circumstance and its material interests, B may find another alternative more materially advantageous. Habitual compliance also allows for A to no longer produce a good for B because B complies to A's rules due to internalization of new interests rather than a cognizant choice of A's good. Thus, the norms (rules) required to provide a good replace the good itself as the critical feature of the authority relationship. However, the act of failing to reproduce a good may, like other changes in the environment, disrupt the relationship in such a way that B resumes self-interested calculation. In a habitual authority relationship, B may not be mindful of its compliance to A's authority, but if the good that established the basis for the authority relationship ceases to be reproduced, then the foundation of authority – the good – disappears and this may or may not become an impetus for B to reevaluate its interests. Further, a reevaluation may lead B to realize its interest in liquidating the authority relationship.

Legitimation is also distinct from self-interested compliance in that self-interest does not necessarily have to be part of B's choice to comply. The process of an actor legitimizing something is not to be confused with the process of an actor pursuing self-interest. A self-interested actor works to make a material circumstance maximally beneficial for the ego, but an interested actor simply works to pursue goals – the goal does not necessarily have to be consistent with maximum material benefits for the self. In legitimate compliance, B is working to pursue its interests (norms, values, and beliefs), and A's rules have not only become consistent with these interests, but the rules have become part of B's interests.[12] In this way, legitimate compliance says that B may choose to comply to A's authority over another alternative even when the alternative would provide a circumstance in which B would be materially better off. This possibility makes legitimate compliance different from self-interested compliance, for an exclusively self-interested actor could not comply with rules that are inconsistent with maximally benefiting the ego. On the other hand, legitimate compliance also does not have to be inconsistent with self-interest, thus it may be difficult to determine the type of compliance operating in a hierarchical relationship when both types of compliance are part of the same relationship.

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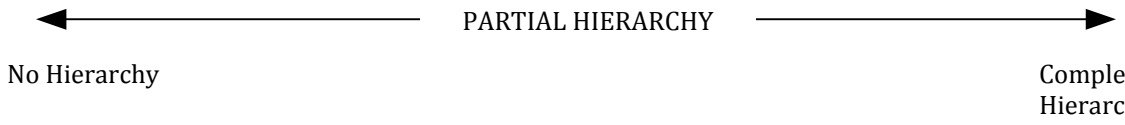
[9] Hurd 1999, p.386-387.
[10] Wendt and Friedheim 1995, p.703.
[11] Hurd 1999, p.388.
[12] Hurd 1999, p.388

I have explained how an authority relationship is different from other forms of hierarchy relationships, yet it is still a type of hierarchy. Scholars also point out that authority relationships necessarily implies the institution of hierarchy.[13] Kim Scheppele and Karol Soltan write that "authority involves a hierarchical relationship between an authority figure and subject, a relationship which gives one the right to give orders to the other and which creates obligations for the other to obey."[14] However, hierarchy is rarely total and is variable in nature, thus hierarchy is a continuous dependent variable which is contingent upon the breadth and depth of behaviors that A can regulate over B.[15] For example, A may have enough authority to regulate B's behaviors 1-5, but A cannot expect compliance for the attempted regulation of behaviors 6-n – where 6-n are behaviors pertaining to greater control over B.[16] In Figure 1, this continuous variable is expressed visually.

As more of B's behaviors can be legitimately regulated by A in an authority relationship, then hierarchy increases in value. "Complete hierarchy," then, exists when A possesses the necessary authority to regulate every behavior that B may perform. Conversely, the absence of hierarchy exists when A lacks any authority over the regulation of B's behaviors. The preponderance of authoritative relationships, where A can legitimately regulate neither all nor none of B's behaviors, lie somewhere in-between the latter extremes in systems that I will call "partial hierarchy."

Figure 1: The Continuous Variable of Hierarchy



It is necessary to reiterate the importance of legitimacy in the above hierarchical circumstances, for B's behaviors, contrary to coercive relationships, are regulated through implicit or explicit consent to A's rules – the rules have become B's interests – rather than implicit or explicit threats by A. Through coercion, B may receive nothing through compliance, but in authority, B's compliance creates expectations that A will act in B's interests through adherence to norms. Hierarchy, however, is not unique to authority relationships, and coercive relationships would also bring about forms of hierarchy. Although authoritative and coercive relationships incur the same dependent variable (hierarchy), the independent variable responsible for the value of the dependent variable differs – consent is to authority what threat is to coercion.

Figure 2 is an elaboration of the concept of hierarchal institutions at the level of global politics. Where state A legitimately regulates all behaviors of state B, an

[13] Lake 2006, p.25; Cronin 2001, p.107; Wendt and Friedheim 1995, p.695.
[14] Scheppele and Soltan 1987, p.170.
[15] Lake 1996, p.7.
[16] Lake 2006, p.25.

empire exists with B as the subordinate. Where authority is absent from an interstate relationship, the resultant structure is debated. The neo-realist school of thought would argue that without authority, the de jure principle of Westphalian sovereignty[17] and international anarchy, thus total state independence, would predominate; however, a competing argument – security governance – would suggest that although state sovereignty is a formal-legal international norm, the consequences of a declining hegemony is entirely contextual. Both cases will be developed later, but for now, we will simply assume that the absence of interstate authority begets, at least, a structural state of Westphalian sovereignty.

The institution that exists between anarchy and empire is hegemony, and the state that acquires consent and constructs authority in a hegemonic institution is a hegemon.[18] The relational characteristics of hegemony, then, are that of partial hierarchy, where A has the ability to regulate only some behaviors of B. The strength, and therefore the survival, of A's hegemony is dependent upon the depth and breadth of behaviors that B gives consent to A to regulate. Thus, as a hegemon loses consent from B (or many "B's"), the institution of hegemony necessarily weakens, and the system moves toward Westphalian sovereignty.

Figure 2: The Continuous Variable of Hierarchy in International Relations

The Hegemonic Role

I have explained the structural characteristics of hegemony based upon legitimate authority, but this does not tell us what hegemony would look like in the day-to-day interactions between the hegemon and its subordinates. In order to understand regular behaviors of actors in hegemony, one must understand the roles prescribed by the social institution of hegemony.

Some materialist scholars have depicted international hegemony solely as a function of asymmetrical distributions of material power indicators, such as economic output, military capacity, or proportions of global trade dominance.[19] These explanations of hegemony, however, fail to account for the importance of norms and expectations that are implicit in any social interaction. Social actors are influenced by the structural, material characteristics of their environment, but they also shape that structure through subjective perception and action based upon that perception. A hegemon and the subordinates of hegemony behave toward one

[17] Wendt and Friedheim 1995, p.695.
[18] Lake 2006, p.25.
[19] Kagan 1998; Kagan 2002; Huntington 1999.

another based upon each actor's perception of the other and of the self.[20] In other words, hegemony is more than material; it is intersubjective.

Hegemony is a social institution, which are rules, enforcement characteristics of rules, and norms of behavior that structure repeated human interaction.[21] Institutions can be formal or informal, and the rules they express can be agreed to implicitly or explicitly. Marriage is a formal institution in most societies, and it has both explicit rules, such as fidelity, and implicit rules, such as which person is responsible for the preponderance of childcare. Further, institutions must prescribe behavioral roles, which constrain activity and shape expectations, to those actors engaged in an institution. In "traditional" societies, marriage prescribes that women play the role of wife as a homemaker and child nurturer while men fill the husband role as "breadwinner".

Because they prescribe behaviors for actors that are interacting with one another, roles are a normative concept. Ralf Turner says that a "Role refers to behavior rather than position, so that one may enact a role but cannot occupy a role . . . The role is made up of all those norms which are thought to apply to a person occupying a given position."[22] The manner in which an actor enacts a role is role performance, which is distinct from the role itself. Using the example of traditional society, a woman is *expected* to play the wife role as a homemaker, but she may *perform* the role as a breadwinner or some balance of the two, which would not be the norm in a traditional society. If enough actors in an institution fail to perform the "correct" role, then expectations of that role change and, thus, the role itself has been changed. Moreover, the institution has been altered to prescribe new role prescriptions.

As an institution, hegemony therefore creates roles – that of the hegemon and those of its subordinates – and role expectations based on the concepts of the roles.[23] In the dynamics of hegemonic role-playing, role expectations are external to the hegemonic state actor – the 'ego' – and are prescribed by subordinate actors – the 'alter'.[24] The alter in global politics may include various constraints of the system structure, such as system-wide values, formal legal principles, formal treaties, informal understandings or customs, foreign opinion, or other states[25], but as it pertains to hegemonic role-playing, I will be focusing primarily on states as the alter.

In an institution of hegemony, some expectations of the alter are a product of the particular authoritative relationship states in the system share with the ego. That is to say, expectations of subordinate states depend, in part, on the rules that a hegemonic authority establishes and that subordinate states have internalized. For example, if the internalized rule of a particular hegemon in an authoritative relationship is that genocide must be stopped, then subordinate states expect

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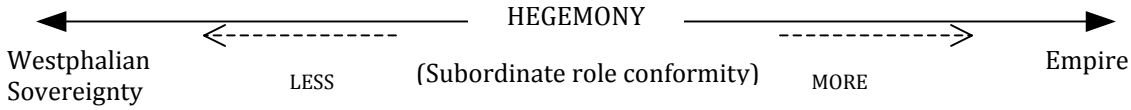
[20] Wendt 1992, p.403-407.
[21] Keohane 1988, p.384.
[22] Holsti 1970, p.238.
[23] Cronin 2001, p.108-109; Holsti 1970, p.239; Keohane 1988, p.384.
[24] Wendt 1992, p.406: he depicts a model of role construction in terms of the ego and the alter that clarifies the process well.
[25] Holsti 1970, p.245.

hegemonic behavior consistent with preventing genocide. There are two particular limits on a hegemonic role: first, de jure equality of subordinate states must be maintained, and second, a hegemon must avoid unilateral acts that violate institutional rules.[26] The first limit reflects the nature of a partial hierarchy, where subordinate states do not consent to regulation of all of their behaviors. The second is in contrast to a circumstance where a hegemon acts unilaterally in a way that is consistent with institutional rules (though it may be disputed if such a case is still considered unilateralism) or a circumstance where a hegemon acts multilaterally. Multilateralism implies consent by the alter and, thus, role performance that fits corresponding expectations.

The subordinates, however, also role-play and have role expectations prescribed by a hegemon. Where subordinate states expect a hegemon to behave consistently with internalized rules within the previously stated limits, subordinate states are expected to comply with demands necessary for the hegemon to act in the interest of those rules. To use the aforementioned illustration, in a system where a hegemon's rule – thus a norm in which all subordinate states have internalized – is that genocide must be stopped, subordinates are expected not to challenge – rhetorically, symbolically, or otherwise – the hegemon's actions toward fulfilling the anti-genocide rule; this hegemon's actions are upholding a rule that is part of the interests of every actor in the institution. Again, expectations are partially a reflection of the system structure of authority, and this applies to both the role of hegemon and subordinate.

The implications of role-playing in a hegemonic institution are profound to the sustained existence of the authority relationship. As discussed before, hegemony is dependent upon the depth and breadth of behaviors that subordinates give consent to a hegemon to regulate. Using the concepts of role theory, subordinate consent to the institution of hegemony is expressed through conformity to or deviation from that institution's roles. If subordinate states' role performance is consistent with the 'subordinate role' expectations, then the state of the hegemony is relatively strong. Figure 3 simply continues the evolution of the hierarchy variable; added in this version is the independent variable of consent through subordinate role conformity, expressed by a sub-continuum. Using the variable model, a system characterized by deviant behavior on the part of subordinate states would be a system of weakening hegemony.

Figure 3: The Continuous Variable of Hierarchy in International Relations



[26] Cronin 2001, p.110.

Measuring Consent

In 2004, the United States spent $466 billion on defense[27] – as much as the next 22 states combined – and in 2006 it had the highest gross domestic product at $13.2 trillion, which is about one fifth of the world economy.[28] In a material sense, American power may be indisputable. However, the ability of America to use its capabilities in international security is contingent upon the intersubjective hegemonic authority that it gains (or loses) through compliance from other states.

I assert two hypotheses regarding American hegemony. First, since at least the fall of the Soviet Union, and the subsequent presidency of William Clinton, America has led hegemony among multiple major states in international relations. Second, this hegemony began to decline due to fundamental policy changes during the administration of George W. Bush. In order to know whether or not American hegemony ever truly existed and, if it did, the weakening or strengthening trend of U.S. authority, one must observe the behavior of relevant actors over time.

As discussed previously, the strength of hegemony can be measured by the role conforming behavior that subordinate states perform. By conforming to the role expectations of a subordinate state, subordinates are consenting to the rules set forth by the hegemonic state. In other words, by conforming to the subordinate role, these states are legitimizing hegemonic authority. On the other hand, the existence of hegemony also implies that a hegemon conforms to particular expectations.

UN Voting Data. In order to spot such role conformity, I used United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) voting data[29] to measure the voting behavior of states relative to the U.S. I decided to use this data because resolutions in the UNGA are usually general position votes that often express a state's interests and ideals. For example, common topics of resolutions that were voted upon from 1993-2005 were the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, human rights violations and principles, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, banning of nuclear testing, global climate change, and arms proliferation.

UN voting behavior between states is one way to measure role-conforming behavior of subordinate states. If subordinates have internalized the norms of a hegemon, then one would expect to see subordinates voting in the UN like the hegemon (the expected role of a subordinate state). If the subordinate states' voting behavior is similar to the U.S., then one can argue that this is proof of hegemony. Causation cannot necessarily be proven, but it can be argued for based upon the theoretical framework that I am using. On the other hand, if subordinate voting behavior is significantly different from the U.S., then one can conclude with a fair amount of certainty that hegemony does not exist, for if a state is not voting like America, then it would be difficult to argue that this state simultaneously legitimates U.S. authority and norms.

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[27] GlobalSecurity.org 2007.
[28] World Bank 2007.
[29] Voeten 2005.

I measured the similarity of voting behavior between two countries by calculating the Cramer's V (V) for correlation of nominal variables. I used a Cramer's V rather than the Contingency coefficient because the former is more conservative thus adding to the validity of my findings. For each resolution, a country's vote could be coded in five ways: yes, abstain, no, absent, or 'not a member'. The formula for V is displayed below. V ranges between 0 and 1, with 0 being absolutely no correlation and 1 being total correlation.

Both of my hypotheses had to be approached in different ways. The first – that America ever led hegemony – is relative to the similarity of voting behavior among all states. For example, if one were to find a mean V of .6 between the U.S.

Figure 4: Formula for Cramer's V for Correlation of Nominal or Categorical Variables

$$V = \sqrt{\frac{\chi^2}{N(k-1)}}$$

Where,

$\chi 2$ = calculated chi-square value

N = the number of cases

k = the number of rows or columns (whichever is smaller)

and all other states in the UNGA, then one could draw no conclusions as to whether .6 is a strong or weak correlation without a basis of comparison. If the average correlation between all countries were .3, then .6 would indeed be a strong correlation. However, if the average correlation between all states were .8, then .6 displays a weak correlation.

With this in mind, I had to create a basis for comparison so that any calculated V could be interpreted meaningfully. This involved using a random sample of seven states (and the U.S.) from the thirty states in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which is an IGO (formed in 1960) that "brings together the governments of countries committed to democracy and the market economy".[30] I calculated the mean V of each of the eight countries as compared to all 189 voting countries included in the UNGA voting dataset. Using OECD countries to create a basis for comparison is more valid than using both OECD and non-OECD countries because OECD states are more like the U.S. than non-OECD states (i.e. OECD states are more economically developed and politically similar). Moreover, using only OECD countries increases the validity of results; using non-OECD would probably lower the overall average because less developed countries tend to vote much differently than OECD countries – possibly reflecting the political coalition of developing countries in the UNGA.

After creating a basis for comparison, which is the mean V of eight OECD countries' voting behavior when compared to all other countries, I proceeded to compare U.S. voting behavior to the voting behavior of all other 24 NATO states in

[30] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2007.

order to measure the possible presence of hegemony. I used NATO states for the reason that if a correlation is to be found among any states, then it would be among NATO states, which share an explicit military alliance with the U.S.

Table 1: Cramer's V Comparisons 1993-2000

1993 – 2000 Mean Cramer's V

OECD vs. World

Country	Cramer's V Mean	Std. Deviation
Finland	0.278	0.257
Turkey	0.268	0.129
Germany	0.267	0.241
Portugal	0.267	0.233
Hungary	0.258	0.214
United States	0.234	0.136
South Korea	0.204	0.131
Japan	0.172	0.080
Mean	0.244	0.178

U.S. vs. NATO

Country	Cramer's V	Deviation
Luxembourg	0.646	0.239
Canada	0.644	0.237
Denmark	0.638	0.231
UK	0.548	0.141
Belgium	0.507	0.100
Germany	0.502	0.095
Netherlands	0.444	0.037
Italy	0.436	0.029
Spain	0.421	0.014
Poland	0.399	-0.008
Hungary	0.375	-0.032
France	0.369	-0.038
Bulgaria	0.366	-0.041
Iceland	0.364	-0.043
Romania	0.352	-0.055
Slovakia	0.348	-0.059
Norway	0.347	-0.060
Slovenia	0.340	-0.067
Latvia	0.339	-0.068
Lithuania	0.329	-0.078
Estonia	0.318	-0.089
Portugal	0.276	-0.131
Greece	0.253	-0.154
Turkey	0.214	-0.193
Mean	0.407	0.119

*Significantly different from 1993-2000 OECD v. World mean at .01 level

The second hypothesis was somewhat less complex to approach in that it only required comparing the mean calculated V of the U.S. versus NATO states over time. Since my hypothesis speculates upon the difference between the Clinton and Bush administrations, I compared voting data from 1993 to 2000 against data from

2001 to 2005. Unfortunately, the dataset stopped at 2005, and the hypothesis could not be tested for the past two years. If a significant difference is found among the mean calculated V between the two time periods, then one could argue that this is evidence for a declining hegemony – assuming the first hypothesis is found to be affirmed – as subordinate states have ceased conforming to role expectations.

Based on the results depicted in Table 1 and Table 2, my first hypothesis is

Table 2: Cramer's V Comparisons 2001-2005

2001-2005 Mean Cramer's V

OECD vs. World

Country	Cramer's V Mean	Std. Deviation
Turkey	0.363	0.157
Finland	0.320	0.307
Hungary	0.299	0.264
Germany	0.296	0.256
Portugal	0.288	0.259
South Korea	0.272	0.206
United States	0.234	0.083
Japan	0.199	0.078
Mean	0.284	0.201

U.S. vs. NATO

Country	Cramer's V	Std. Deviation
UK	0.338	0.101
Slovakia	0.271	0.034
Spain	0.268	0.031
Iceland	0.266	0.029
France	0.263	0.026
Italy	0.252	0.015
Hungary	0.243	0.006
Germany	0.242	0.005
Poland	0.235	-0.002
Canada	0.233	-0.004
Lithuania	0.232	-0.005
Portugal	0.231	-0.006
Netherlands	0.227	-0.010
Greece	0.223	-0.014
Bulgaria	0.223	-0.014
Belgium	0.222	-0.015
Romania	0.222	-0.015
Slovenia	0.221	-0.016
Latvia	0.219	-0.018
Luxembourg	0.218	-0.019
Denmark	0.218	-0.019
Norway	0.217	-0.020
Estonia	0.211	-0.026
Turkey	0.202	-0.035
Mean	0.237	0.029

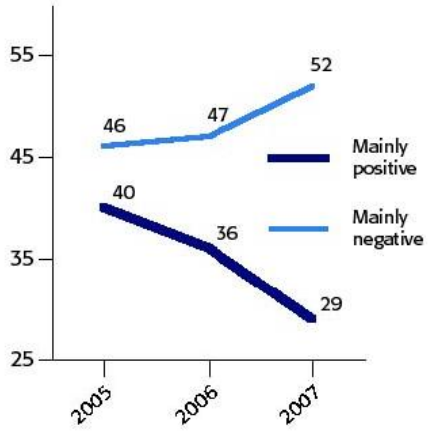
*Significantly different from 1993-2000 US v. NATO mean at the .0001 level

**Not significantly different from 2001-2005 OECD v. World mean

confirmed. While the world average V among OECD states during the Clinton administration (1993-2000) is .244, the U.S. averages .407 among NATO members during the same period. This is a significant difference (at the .01 level) between the two means and demonstrates the authority that America had among some countries during that time. However, the difference only appears among NATO states, for the mean V when the U.S. is compared to the entire world (.234) is very close to the mean V of all OECD countries (.244). One cannot claim, then, that the U.S. had hegemony over all states, in general. The results also confirm my second hypothesis. Not only does the significant difference disappear between the OECD mean V (.284) and the NATO mean V (.237) during the Bush administration (2001-2005), but a significant difference exists at the .001 level between the NATO mean V during Clinton years (.407) and during Bush years (.237). This significant difference reflects a decline in U.S. hegemony among states that, during the Clinton administration, voted significantly more similar to America in the UN General Assembly.

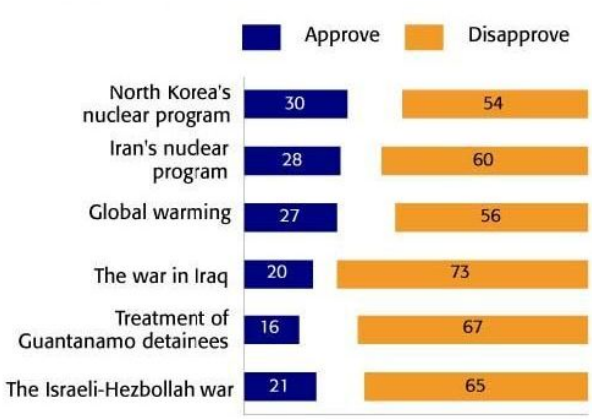
Global Attitudes Data. Another, less direct, approach to measuring the role conformity of nations as subordinates in hegemony is to investigate the attitudes of the nations' publics. Assuming that the views of the public have some bearing on the policy of representatives in modern democracies, one can gauge the attitude of a national government toward the United States by measuring the attitudes of that government's constituency. Using the Pew Research Center's 16-nation Global

Figure 5: Average of 18 Countries' Views on U.S. Influence, 2005-2007
From BBC World Service



Base: Representative sample of 18,000 adults in 18 countries

Figure 6: Opinions' of the U.S. Government's Handling of Major International Events
From BBC World Service



Base: Representative sample of 26,000 adults in 25 countries
The white space in this chart represents "DK/NA."

Attitudes Project survey as well as a BBC World Service survey of 25 countries[31], one can observe that the global attitudes toward America, along with UN voting records, affirms both hypotheses, but the surveys make a much stronger

[31] Extensive methodology for both surveys can be found in their respective reports that are referenced at the end of this paper.

case for declining authority (second hypothesis) than the existence of American hegemony (first hypothesis).

Looking first at the BBC World Service survey, from 2005 to 2007, the positive image of America among 18 nations declined 11% (Figure 5). In data

Table 3: Global Attitudes by Country from November 2006 to January 2007
Source: BBC World Service

Country	Positive	Negative	Iraq	Iran	Israel	Guantanamo	N.Korea	Climate	M.East
France	24	69	92	77	81	82	67	86	80
Germany	16	74	88	64	74	89	56	84	73
Hungary	29	31	70	55	57	69	50	53	58
Italy	35	47	81	60	70	82	58	74	69
Poland	38	24	52	35	40	61	26	31	56
Portugal	29	55	83	57	72	84	51	79	77
Turkey	7	69	90	81	89	85	71	65	76
UK	33	57	81	64	70	76	55	79	72
NATO mean	26	53	80	62	69	79	54	69	70
Argentina	13	64	92	85	85	78	78	78	86
Australia	29	60	78	63	66	77	48	68	72
Brazil	29	57	85	80	82	76	75	73	83
Chile	32	51	65	62	66	63	59	63	68
China	28	52	83	60	66	59	56	35	72
Egypt	11	59	90	91	92	87	56	59	85
India	30	28	41	36	38	39	33	22	38
Indonesia	21	71	85	77	81	72	73	52	83
Kenya	35	47	32	25	35	38	25	21	46
Lebanon	34	58	90	64	82	80	68	68	77
Mexico	12	53	80	51	58	70	46	67	80
Nigeria	72	20	39	42	38	38	34	55	38
Phillipines	72	11	34	35	33	32	31	21	39
Russia	19	59	82	64	64	57	56	36	72
S.Korea	35	54	78	55	70	60	55	45	75
UAE	25	57	80	78	81	77	66	54	66
Non-NATO Mean	31	50	71	61	65	63	54	51	68
US	57	28	57	50	47	50	43	54	53
World Mean	31	50	73	60	65	67	53	57	68

Positive = Positive views of U.S. influence (%)
Negative = Negative views of U.S. influence (%)
Iraq = Disapprove of U.S. government's handling of war in Iraq (%)
Iran = Disapprove of U.S. government's handling of Iran's nuclear program (%)
Israel = Disapprove of U.S. government's handling of Israeli-Hezbollah War (%)
Guantanamo = Disapprove of U.S. government's handling of Detainess in Guantanamo (%)
N.Korea = Disapprove of U.S. government's handling of North Kored's nuclear weapon program (%)
Climate = Disapprove of U.S. government's handling of global warming or global climate change (%)
M.East = Opinion that U.S. military presence in the Middle East "provokes more conflict than it prevents" (%)

collected from November 2006 to January 2007, the majority of views of American foreign policy on major international issues among 26,381 respondents in 25 states

were highly disapproving (Figure 6). It is hard to make an argument for U.S. hegemony when so many people worldwide disapprove of the way America is performing its role in international relations. However, the results above are based upon the average of respondents in all countries, and as stated before, if a hegemonic relationship is to be found among any countries, then it would among the states of NATO that share an explicit military pact with the U.S.

Attitudes among various NATO publics are equally as unsupporting of American hegemony as the averages in Figures 5 and 6. When asked about their opinions of the American government's handling of various international events, citizens of NATO states are actually *more* likely than non-NATO citizens to be disapproving (Table 3). This is especially true for the issues of the war in Iraq, the detainees in Guantanamo Bay, and global warming. The results of this survey seem to uphold my second hypothesis of declining authority. On the other hand, while the cross-national comparison of the BBC survey is somewhat valuable for accessing the second hypothesis, it unfortunately lacks in substantial longitudinal parameters that could offer insight into the change between the Bush and Clinton White Houses. Furthermore, the survey cannot provide any insight into the first hypothesis – whether or not American hegemony ever exists among NATO states.

For that, we turn to the Pew Center's Global Attitudes Project survey. Table 4 shows a clear trend of dropping favorable opinion of the U.S. among NATO and non-NATO states alike. This is especially prevalent in 2003, the year that the Bush

Table 4: Favorable Opinion of the United States (%) 1999-2005
Source: Pew Research Center

Country	1999/'00	2002	2003	2004	2005
Canada	71	72	63	-	59
France	62	63	43	37	43
Germany	78	61	45	38	41
Netherlands	-	-	-	-	45
Poland	-	79	-	-	62
Spain	50	-	38	-	41
Turkey	52	30	15	30	23
UK	83	75	70	58	55
NATO mean	66	63	46	41	46
China	-	-	-	-	42
India	-	54	-	-	71
Indonesia	75	61	15	-	38
Jordan	-	25	1	5	21
Lebanon	-	35	27	-	42
Morocco	77	-	27	27	-
Pakistan	23	10	13	21	23
Russia	37	61	36	47	52
Non-NATO Mean	53	41	20	25	41
World Mean	61	52	33	33	44

administration decided to invade Iraq without United Nations approval, where the mean opinion falls 17% among NATO countries and 21% among non-NATO

countries. Although the only data provided for Clinton years is from 1999/2000, the drop in favorable opinion from the Clinton to the Bush years further upholds the hypothesis of declining authority between the two administrations; consent among states and their citizens are far lower during the Bush administration.

In terms of the hypothesis of American hegemony, there appears to be a significant difference between NATO and non-NATO publics, where favorable opinion is at least 15% higher in the former in every year except 2005 – suggesting American authority in NATO states and providing support for my first hypothesis. Unfortunately, there are too few states and recorded numbers in this particular dataset to show sufficient significance among many of the comparisons; furthermore, the non-NATO set of countries is too small and too similar to be considered representative of the rest of the nations of the world. For example, every non-NATO state is from the Asian continent save Morocco, a predominantly Muslim country[32], and even then, the number of non- NATO states is only 8 (5% of non-NATO UN member states). In other words, comparisons between years (declining authority hypothesis) are more valid than attempts to compare NATO and non-NATO states (American hegemony hypothesis) using the Pew Center survey.

Both surveys of global attitudes present evidence in favor of my second hypothesis, but only the Pew Center's survey provides any insight for the first hypothesis. Even then, the Pew dataset is not large enough, especially among non-NATO countries, to show a valid, significant difference between the American authority in NATO states and non-NATO states.

Implications of a Weakening Hegemony

With the evidence for the existence American hegemony and subsequent decline of authority provided, I will move on to discussing possible outcomes of a declining hegemony. There are two very different perspectives on the security consequences of an international system experiencing a declining hegemony: neo-realism and security governance. Furthermore, within each school, there are various arguments as to the implications of such a circumstance.

The paradigm of neo-realism rests on the assumptions that states are the most important actors in global politics, the international system is anarchic, and power is the most important asset in interstate relations. Thus, there is no greater source of governance than the state, so individual states are self-interested and have as their primary concern the continued existence of their states.[33] Beyond these basic assumptions, neo-realists may follow multiple lines of thought in terms of a declining hegemony. I will briefly describe some of these theories below.

Long cycle theory is a historical approach that extrapolates future outcomes based upon past trends. It argues that since 1500, five successive state hegemons have dominated the international system through military power; each hegemon further capitalizes on such a system by manipulating world trade to benefit itself.

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[32] CIA World Factbook

[33] Krahmann 2005, p.534; Waltz 1979.

Each period of hegemony is deemed a 'cycle' and each new cycle is born through major warfare when the dominant state is in a process of decline. The instances of weakening hegemony, then, are central to long cycle theory, and it would tell us that a weakening hegemony necessarily would lead to hegemonic warfare.[34]

Hegemonic stability theory asserts that state actors that hold a preponderance of power establish hegemonies[35], and the structural fact that one state possesses much of the economic and military power creates stability. Thus, a hegemon provides stability as a public good, where the status quo benefits other states. Hegemonies decline when power becomes more equally distributed among various major state actors. Since costs of maintaining the status quo are high, hegemons are "historically bound" to fall victim to slowing rates of power growth.[36] Thus, as a hegemon gains power more slowly (or loses power) and other states gain power at a faster rate, those states will be more powerful relative to the entire system. In light of its new power, hegemonic stability theory posits that a rising state will want to change the rules of the system, so a declining hegemon takes preventive measures in order to maintain the status quo. Historically, war is the primary method of challenging a hegemon, so this theory argues that a declining hegemony will likely result in warfare.[37]

Transition theory holds that the international system is always hierarchical in that power is distributed unequally as states are in constant competition over resources. Furthermore, the degree of satisfaction that a state's elites have with its position in the structural hierarchy is the critical factor in determining the potential for international order.[38] Transition theory hypothesizes that the closer the top states are in power distribution, the more likely that the elites in the non-dominant state will be unsatisfied with their state's position and that the elites in each state will perceive the situation as threatening. Thus, the rising power will challenge the status quo state and conflict is likely. The primary difference between transition and hegemonic stability theory is that the hegemon initiates warfare in the latter while the challenger initiates conflict in the former.[39]

Finally, power cycle theory differs from the prior three models in that it adds a second dimension – the role that statespeople perceive that their state or another state plays in the system – to the dimension of structural power distribution. Role and power are separate but equally important entities in understanding international relations; this theory recognizes the agency of state actors.[40] Role and power form the key dynamic in determining the outcome of a declining hegemony. A state's power cycle is the process of increasing and decreasing power as measured by various structural power indicators (such as economic and military resources). When a state's structural power and perceived role get out of sync – when statespeople perceive that their state or another state is more or less powerful than

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[34] Kohout 2003, p.54.
[35] Hasenclever, Mayer, and Rittberger 1996, p.197.
[36] Kohout 2003, p.55.
[37] Kohout 2003, p.56.
[38] Kohout 2003, p.57.
[39] Yoon 2003, p.8.
[40] Yoon 2003, p.6.

it is – then "structural disequilibrium" results.[41] Structural disequilibrium threatens to escalate to armed conflict, though, only if it occurs during a "critical cycle point" in a state's power cycle – the period of time that a state, relative to other states, begins to significantly gain or lose power. Power cycle theorists claim that the specific cause of disequilibrium is the linear expectations of policymakers, who project expectations based upon past experience because history shows that structural change usually continues prior trends. However, during the rare times when these trends break (unpredictable critical cycle points), the linear expectations create a gap between state role and power. The result is a system characterized by a discontinuity of expectations, heightened threat perception, and perceived injustice – all of which are conducive to war.[42] According to power cycle theory, a system that contains a declining hegemon is susceptible to war because that hegemon's policymakers are likely to project their state role in an unrepresentative manner.

The other perspective on hegemonic decline that I will review is a growing body of literature on the application of global governance to international security, called security governance. Unlike its academic converse in neo-realism, security governance gained prominence as a theoretical framework after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent shift of the international system to that of one characterized by a singular superpower. The focus anymore became not great power posturing and looming superpower warfare, for most remaining great powers had too much to lose from interstate conflict – conflict akin to centuries past – due to the global economy. Instead, the security issues became centered around ethnic conflict and genocide, transnational crime, weapons of mass destruction, and terrorism. Such events usually cut across traditional state borders and are perpetuated by groups often unaccountable to state actors. As such, security governance argues that in order to combat such security threats, solutions also must include actors that transcend the state – a move from "government" to "governance".

Based upon the reality of international security after the Cold War, security governance makes several assumptions. First, states are not the single most important source of threat to international security; as mentioned above, terrorism, crime, and weapon proliferation are equally important issues in international security.[43] In other words, global security must also include the security of individuals, regardless of their state of residence.[44] This first assumption of security governance reflects the cosmopolitan nature of the theoretical perspective. As opposed to communitarianism (reflected in neo-realism), which places supreme value on the community (thus the state) before the individual and espouses a moral relativism, cosmopolitanism argues that morality begins with the individuals that make up communities and that a community does not possess a moral value in and of itself. "For cosmopolitans the principles of justice are universal and for

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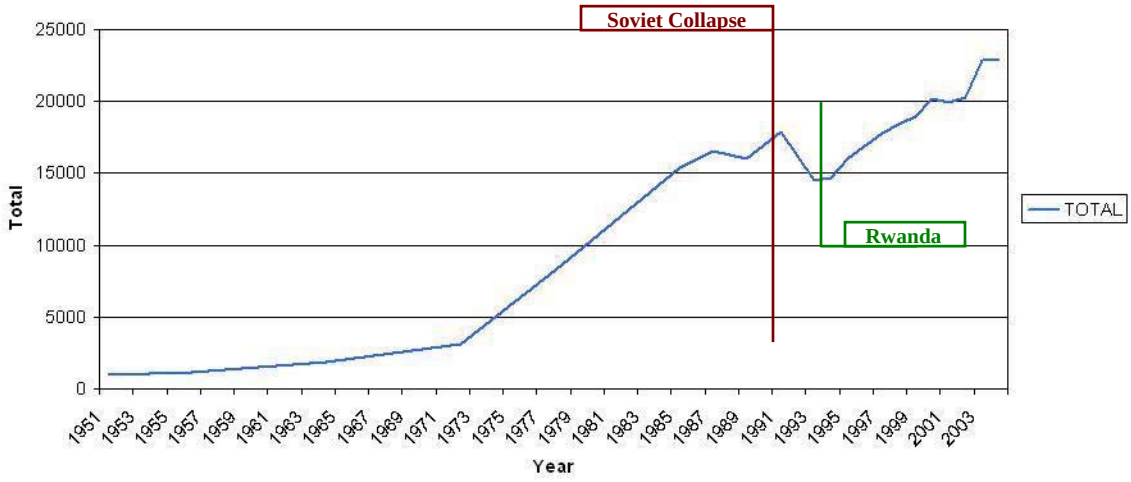
[41] Kohout 2003, p.59.
[42] Kohout 2003, p.60.
[43] Commission on Global Governance 1995, p.79; Rosenau 1992, p.3; Tuathail, Herod, and Roberts 1998, p.12; Thomas 2000, p.161-162.
[44] Krahmann 2005, p.537.

communitarians they are culturally specific."[45] The implications for international relations are important; states no longer have an unchallenged mandate to sovereignty, ruling their populations as they see fit. If a state does not or is not able to provide for the security of its citizens, then cosmopolitanism and security governance bestows a responsibility upon other agents (be they state or otherwise) to act in the interest of those people.

The second assumption of security governance is that state-centric solutions are inadequate in addressing transnational security threats.[46] For hundreds of years, states honed the art of dealing with other state threats in international relations; however, with rise of contemporary security concerns, traditional state-based methods became inadequate.[47] As a result, security governance argues that a greater number of inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have emerged in order to better confront new threats.[48]

Figure 7: Total Number of IGOs and NGOs: 1909-2004
Source: Union of International Associations



According to the Union of International Associations, 213 IGOs and international NGOs existed in 1909, and that number rose to 3,075 groups in 1972. In 1989, shortly before the collapse of the Soviet Union and the bipolar international system, there were 16,044, and by 2004 there were 22,891 organizations around the globe.[49] Figure 4 depicts a noticeable drop in total groups immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union that is probably due to the disbanding of democratic transition groups in the Eastern bloc. However, the chart clearly shows a dramatic

[45] Jordaan 2006, p.1.
[46] Krahmann 2005, p.537.
[47] Haass 1999.
[48] Commission on Global Governance 1995, p.86; Minaer, van Baarda, and Sommers 2000; Singer 2003.
[49] Union of International Associations 2007; Union of International Associations 2006.

increase in total organizations in the mid 1970's and another resurgence after 1994. The second growth in groups is likely to be related to the genocide in Rwanda, for the travesty in Africa reflected the inability of the state-run system to deal with new global problems in the post-Cold War era. As a result of the growth in actors other than single states to manage security troubles, states must increasingly cooperate with other supra-state and sub-state actors in providing security. In Rwanda, for example, the United States would not intervene, in part, due to the domestic intolerance with humanitarian intervention triggered by its military losses in Mogadishu, Somalia; threatened Rwandans could therefore not depend on capable, individual states to act because political will for unilateral, humanitarian military intervention is difficult to cultivate. Rather, genocide may be more effectively combated through cooperative IGO action that diffuses responsibility and committed resources, for the relatively low level of commitment demanded by each state may better the chances of fostering the national political will to act. Alternatively, social service needs related to genocide may be provided more successfully through NGOs or NGO-state partnerships that alleviate any responsibility upon the state in various capacities (such as providing medical care to refugees).

The last assumption of the paradigm of security governance is that state legitimacy is based upon the cost-efficient delivery of security by a state to its citizens.[50] Not only does this once again reveal the cosmopolitan underpinnings of security governance, but it also expresses the flexibility of security governance. That is, actors at all levels (above, at, and below the state) are less concerned than international actors of the past (who were primarily states) with firm, long-lasting alliances than with short-term, cost-efficient coordination that is aimed at promptly solving modern security concerns.

Three specific hypotheses follow from the assumptions of security governance: cooperation, specialization, and "coalitions of the willing".[51] Mentioned above, states must increasingly cooperate with other state and non-state actors in order to provide security for their citizens. The search for cost-efficient security also encourages geographical and functional specialization of state and non-state actors; thus, one should see a sort of global "division of labor", where various NGOs, IGOs, and states tend to fill particular roles in providing global security. Finally, alliances and balance-of-power politics are replaced by structurally neutral "coalitions of the willing" that are aimed at finding the most cost-efficient solutions to solving security issues; 'structurally neutral' meaning that these coalitions ought to provide little or no threat to states in the system as the short-term partnerships are supposed to be confronting problems in the interest of the majority of people, and thus the majority of states.

[50] Camm 1996; Markusen 2003, p.473.
[51] Krahmann 2005, p.537.

Conclusion

A large body of theory has been built around the concept of authority as a form of power in international relations as well as the system of intersubjective hegemony for which authority can construct. Furthermore, hegemony confers roles upon its various actors – a hegemon and subordinates – that create expectations for interaction between the actors, and the actors' role performances determine whether or not a system of hegemony will strengthen or decline. Thus, if one wants to measure the strength of hegemony, then one must measure the role conformity of its actors. Using UN General Assembly voting records and cross-national attitude surveys, I have found strong evidence in support of the hypotheses that 1) America had sufficient authority over NATO countries during the Clinton administration to lead a system of hegemony over those states, and 2) the system of hegemony declined significantly during the Bush administration as policy choices caused a loss of authority among NATO countries.

After a review of the neo-realist and security governance perspectives, one is left with two vastly different outlooks for the state of international affairs after the decline of hegemony. While neo-realism generally sees a less stable system headed toward great power state conflict, security governance tells of a system characterized by flexible partnerships of both state and non-state actors working toward solving transnational security problems that have only recently come to the fore in international relations.

In light of the theoretical framework of hegemony – and a declining hegemony – discussed above as well as the evidence that the U.S. has led – but may no longer lead – hegemony among some countries, one is left asking an important question in wanting to know the circumstances of international affairs. Are we to see the rise of a challenger to American dominance in a state-centric manner, or are affairs going to be focused on new transnational issues that are solved by an assortment of actors? Though some of the assumptions and hypotheses pertaining to this question were addressed in the last section, a vigorous investigation is beyond the scope of this paper and is worthy of further in-depth study. A person undertaking such research may want to use the various hypotheses of neo-realist theories or the three hypotheses set forth by security governance as a starting point.

In addition to the neo-realist and security governance viewpoints in the case of declining hegemony, there is still the possibility that hegemony between the U.S. and other states may be strengthened once again. As the American political landscape passes through the gauntlet of presidential election season for 2008, one could surely imagine a situation where the victorious candidate seeks to regain the authority once enjoyed by the U.S. government during the Clinton administration. John Edwards, a candidate until recently in the Democratic party, said, "We must do everything in our power to reclaim the United States' historic role as a beacon for the world and become, once again, a shining example for other nations to follow."[52]

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[52] JohnEdwards.com

Likewise, Senator Hillary Clinton said in a speech to the Center for a New American Security, "America must be the world's leader and yet we cannot lead unless we restore the greatness and goodness of America in the eyes of the world."[53] On the other hand, John McCain, a leading Republican candidate, suggests an American foreign policy that does not recognize – or does not care about – the decline of American authority; while the theme of regaining moral authority is rife in the web pages of Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, MCain's website does not mention the issue of damaged international relationships or comparable concerns. His official position on the topic of the "National Security" is that America needs a larger and stronger military to protect the U.S.'s vital interests in a "dangerous world" of rogue states and the rise of China and Russia.[54]

Aside from the matter of where the new American president will take nation internationally, there is the related yet distinctive normative question: what ought the United States do in the face of declining hegemony? This is a question of values, or more specifically, a question of who is valued. Certainly, continuing the unilateral and neo-conservative policy of the current administration is among the worst options. Even if the needs and lives of Americans were considered ten times more valuable than non-Americans, non-Westerners, or terrorists (whichever categorization is implemented), then the alienation of the U.S. from other countries is less prudent than multilateralism. In a world characterized by stateless security threats, cooperation and assistance by a large assembly of nations is of the utmost importance in providing security to American citizens, for the United States could not possibly carry out a unilateral invasion of every state in which terrorists operate or weapons of mass destruction exist.

Regaining the authority once enjoyed by America is a better decision. If new hegemony is to be led by America, however, then it ought to be constructed in a broader manner than the previous one. As this study has shown, under the Clinton administration, the U.S. had authority over NATO countries at best, but most modern international security problems are rooted in the countries not usually associated with the "West". The most effective policy, whether it prioritizes the well-being of the citizens of America or the citizens the world, will have the support of every county in which terrorists reside, poppy is grown, or uranium is enriched. The new hegemony must seek to persuade every nation that the United States is an asset to the security and values of its people and all people. Furthermore, as large nations, such as China and India, continue to grow economically and militarily, these states will seek a more prominent role in international affairs, and hegemony that splits the world into East and West or 'prosperous' and 'developing' will not be able to adapt to this reality. Only consent today among these rising nations will be open to shifting relationships tomorrow. The United States may have more material resources and capabilities than any other country on Earth, but its ability to use these resources effectively hinges on the consent among other countries to use those resources and capabilities.

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[53] HillaryClinton.com
[54] JohnMcCain.com

Finally, the best – albeit long-term – American policy from a cosmopolitan perspective would be to confront international security problems in framework of a world of equals. The ultimate and most effective international system of authority is a democratic one in which every nation explicitly consents to the system of decision-making that addresses global security concerns. In such a system, states pool their resources and share the burden of common security issues, which minimizes the likelihood of misunderstanding and conflict. In pursuing such a policy today, the United States ought to strengthen the mandate of the United Nations as well as seek to make the organization more democratic and responsive. If America truly champions the rights to democracy and liberty for its citizens, then it should assure that other citizens' rights are not violated in solving security problems. That is to say, the best way to guarantee that the U.S. does not violate the preferences of others in addressing global security is to include them in the decision – this is the finest form of consent.

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